

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06

PRS-01 CU-02 /066 W

-----191736Z 088523 /43

P R 191654Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY BAMA KO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6504

INFO USIA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT ML

SUBJECT: DEATH OF FORMER PRESIDENT KEITA

1. FORMER MALIAN PRESIDENT MODIBO KEITA, AFTER A LONG ILLNESS, DIED EVENING MAY 16 IN BAMA KO. OFFICIAL MEDIA ANNOUNCED HIS DEATH ROUTINELY MAY 17, REFERRING TO HIM AS A RETIRED FORMER TEACHER. LARGE EMOTIONAL CROWD INCLUDING MANY YOUNG PEOPLE AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS ATTENDED FUNERAL SERVICES MAY 18.

2. THERE WERE POLITICAL DEMONSTRATIONS INVOLVING ESTIMATED 3,000 YOUNG PEOPLE SAME DAY IN BAMA KO, WHICH WAS SATURATED WITH TROOPS. OVER 30 TANKS AND ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIERS MOVED INTO THE CAPITAL FROM NEARLY MILITARY BASE AT KATI. STUDENT TOOL CONTROL OF THE COFFIN AFTER SCUFFLING WITH POLICE AND MARCHED TO CEMETERY SHOUTING "LONG LIVE (SIC)

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MODIBO" AND "DOWN WITH MOUSSA", REFERRING TO PRESIDENT MOUSSA TRAORE. DEMONSTRATIONS SPREAD TO THE DOWNTOWN AREA WHERE MERCHANTS QUICKLY CLOSED THEIR SHOPS. ACCORDING TO EYE-WITNESSES THERE WERE SOME CONFRONTATIONS BETWEEN STUDENTS AND POLICE UNTIL ABOUT NOON.

3. THERE IS A RUMOR GAINING CURRENCY THAT MODIBO WAS POISONED.

RATIONALE GIVEN IS THAT FRENCH PRESIDENT GISCARD J'ESTAING EXTRACTED PROMISE LAST FEBRUARY FROM PRESIDENT TRAORE TO RELEASE MODIBO, BUT HE REFUSED THE "PARDON", DENYING THAT HE HAD EVER BEEN GUILTY OF ANY CRIMES. MILITARY COMMITTEE REPORTEDLY DENIED HIM UNCONDITIONAL RELEASE DEMENDED. ACCORDING TO SOURCE CLOSE TO PRESIDENT'S FAMILY, MODIBO'S MOTHER VISITED HIM MAY 15 AND HIS WIFE VISITED HIM MAY 16. NEITHER NOTICED, NOR DID EX-PRESIDENT REMARK ON, ANY WORSENING OF HIS CONDITION. ALTHOUGH NOTHING CAN BE EXCLUDED, THEORY OF POISONING OF MODIBO AFTER HIS SPENDING MORE THAN EIGHT YEARS IN PRISON WOULD SEEM SOMEWHAT ILLOGICAL.

4. COMMENT: MODIBO'S DEATH, COMING AT END OF LONG STUDENT STRIKE, HAS EFFECT OF REMINDING POPULACE THAT FORMER PRESIDENT WAS LEGALLY INSTALLEC CHIEF OF STATE, IN CONTRAST TO INCOMBENT, WHO TOOK POWER IN 1968 COUP; AND OF RALLYING STUDENTS AND OTHER OPPOSITION ELEMENTS AGAINST RULING GROUP. ON THE OTHER HAND, IT COULD BE ARGUED THAT DEMISE OF MODIBO, ASSUMING HE DIED OF NATURAL CAUSES, REMOVES POLITICAL LIABILITY OF CHARISMATIC LEADER LOOKING OVER SHOULDER OF LACK-LUSTER MILITARY COMMITTEE. TIME WILL TELL.
BYRNE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS, DEATHS, ALLEGATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 19-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Executive Order: N/A
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Handling Restrictions: n/a
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